

# **Listing Decision for Four Central Texas Salamanders**

## **About the Document**

The Service will remove four salamander species occurring within the central Texas area from the candidate list. The four species include the Austin blind salamander (*Eurycea waterlooensis*), Jollyville Plateau salamander (*Eurycea tonkawae*), Georgetown salamander (*Eurycea naufragia*), and Salado salamander (*Eurycea chisholmensis*). To remove these salamanders from the candidate list means to propose them for listing as threatened or endangered or to prepare a not warranted finding. A listing proposal will include proposed critical habitat, if prudent and determinable. Following a listing proposal, a final listing determination will follow within the statutory timelines.

## **About the Peer Review Process**

**Peer review initiated:** July 2012

**Peer review to be completed by:** September 2012

### **Process:**

- The Service is conducting a peer review of the portion of the listing decision that includes a discussion of the scientific information reviewed and our analysis (but not our conclusion regarding the status of the species or critical habitat boundaries).
- The Service will conduct external peer review of this document through letters to three independent scientific reviewers with expertise in invertebrate ecology, conservation biology, and/or desert spring ecology.
- Peer reviewers may be asked to: comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in analysis, identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies, provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence, ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear, and provide advice on the strengths and limitation of the overall product.
- If the Service moves forward with a final rule, the Service will use the information received from the peer review.

## **About Public Participation**

- Public comments on the listing decision for this species will be sought concurrently with publication of this decision document in the Federal Register and through distribution by mail and press release of this announcement to interested parties.
- This peer review plan will be posted on the Service's website for public review and comment.
- The Service will post a notice on its website of the final decision, which will include a summary of the results of the peer review process.

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